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## AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN HARIHARAN'S *THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT*

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The paper analyses portrayal of women and their identity in Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The novel centers around the character emergency of a young lady youngster. The novel's title is propelled by the problem looked at by its hero, Devi. The legend of Parvati, Sita and Savitri are developed and rehashed to advance the customary picture of ladies, which prompts magnanimous condition of a lady. The recorded accounts of Geinga, Amba, Gandhari and Damyanti, who are images of selflessness, are emblazoned on the mind of the ladies. The very ideals commended in their characters wind up instrumental in the enduring of regular ladies.

**Keywords:** Identity, Women, Githa Hariharan,

### **INTRODUCTION:**

*The Thousand Faces of Night* centers around the character emergency of a young lady youngster. The title of the novel is propelled by the problem looked at by its hero, Devi, who "encounters the horrors of *The Thousand Faces of Night*", dreaming of "bodies tearing away their shadows and melting, like liquid wax burnt by moonlight" (74). Ladies, particularly moms and grandmas, show worry in urging their little girls to pursue the generalizations. The legend of Parvati, Sita and Savitri are developed and rehashed to advance the customary picture of ladies, which prompts magnanimous condition of a lady. The recorded accounts of Geinga, Amba, Gandhari and Damyanti, who are images of selflessness, are emblazoned on the mind of the ladies. The very ideals commended in their

characters wind up instrumental in the enduring of regular ladies. This paper attempts to analyze women characters and their identities in a critical way.

### ***THE THOUSAND FACES OF NIGHT:***

*The Thousand Faces of Night* has a hero young lady Devi-who is at the limit of womanhood. The epic is an adventure of her character's emergency and her endeavors to leave it. Like Indira Goray in Santha Ram Rau's *Remember the House*, Devi is a result of western training attempting to discover her underlying foundations. More often than not, these books manage the development and maturity of the female heroes who go from their youthful likes and convictions into tolerating the substances of life. For Hariharan's situation, Devi experiences this stage as a female who challenges the male centric set-up, subsequently to break with ordinariness. Devi, has a place with a standard Brahmin family who goes to America to finish her instruction and her mission starts when she ends up in the middle of her new involvement in an American University and a probability to return to her local land. When she has come back to her precursor's home, she starts by scrutinizing the innate desires for the given job. Her journey for self-revelation starts, and opportunity of the self from these pre-set up jobs develops as her essential concern.

Devi remains between custom and innovation. She had invested her energy in Madras and Bangalore as indicated by the standards of a Brahmin family where the outside world infrequently intercedes. In Devi one sees an upsetting and conflicting partiality with harsh parts of custom, while settling on a liberal and modern way of life, which constrains her to make pre-marriage and additional conjugal sexual relations with Dan and Gopal separately. Devi's alumni understudy days provided her an opportunity to "shed her inhibitions and her burden of Indianness" (4), yet powerless to do away with her Indianness or her Brahminic convention, Devi feels awkward among Dan's companions and their appearance of dark character, and sets out to dismiss his proposition to be engaged so as to come back to India as: "these proposals were not potent enough to reconjure the myth-laden world that had soaked up her past. Instead they led her gently, with grasping, watery fingers, to walk along the shores of an Indian

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rebirth" (6). Directly before leaving the US, Devi "felt a piercing ache to see her mother. But equally powerful was a nameless dread she only partly acknowledged: the dread of the familiar love, stifling and all- pervasive; of a world beyond her classroom and laboratory, charged with a more pungent uncertainty" (7).

In this manner, Hariharan contacts upon the topic of encounter of East and West, the accentuation is on the contention itself, as opposed to on the shrewd impacts of an outsider culture. The hero remains at the intersection of progress, from convention to advancement, attempting to assess both and acknowledge the best out of the two universes. At the point when Devi was a kid, she had heard numerous legendary stories praising womanhood by her grandma. Devi's grandma never gave her an immediate answer to any inquiry or question identified with the states of the ladies around them, rather portrayed a story fitting to the circumstance. This sort of mysterious holding among Devi and her grandma is emblematic of numerous potential outcomes that are available to all ladies through the vital tutor figures, good examples and motivated ladies among them. Devi thinks back: "My grandmother's lap was soft and she murmured gently like a little brown and yellow bird, but the bony thighs I felt through her soft sari were as warm and solid as the afternoon- baked earth below me. Her pallav covered my face, enclosing it like a silken refuge" (18).

It is this physical, mental and passionate closeness that gives the rhythm and tenor to Devi's introduction into the universe of ladies. She is her first instructor; she bestows mystery information to her through a deliberate re-counting the stories of the overlooked ladies of the past-Damyanti, Gandhari, Amba and Ganga and relates these stories with those of conventional ladies Sita (Devi's mom), Uma (A servant in Devi's home), Gauri (Devi's cousin) or Devi-into well-known examples of valor and enduring. As Devi herself places it: "In my grandmother's mind the link between her stories and our own lives was a very vital one" (30). Devi, benefited from these narratives of her legendary precursors, develops into a visionary possessing once in a while an additional physical domain.

In her fantasies and dreams, she appreciates a closeness with her legendary courageous women, a contact with divinities and elements of the other world: These visions restore a magico- ecstatic life- dimension which recaptures the ancestral matrilineal vision of the world. The creative ecstasy that is transmitted through the great matrilineage over generations from grandmother to granddaughter constitutes an important female rite of passage in which the initiate acquires the knowledge of women's artistic power and creativity that can set transformational forces of women to work in life, and the world. All these accounts of the grandma finished with an exhortation, which proposed that a lady should battle alone for her personality in this male overwhelmed world: "a woman meets her fate alone" (28); "a woman fights her battles alone" (36). Ladies should shape their personality inside given socio-social conditions.

Indian culture requests ladies to be subservient to men. Chodrow depicts female identity as a social and smoothly characterized ideal from outset to womanhood. She contends about female personality based on sociological and chronicled grounds and not on natural one. As she would see it this criteria of passing judgment on a lady's character turns into the underlying driver of her concealment. Devi, who was raised on a sentimental eating routine of anecdotes about the hallowedness of wedlock, discovers her very own wedded life boundlessly frustrating. Her grandma used to guarantee her that all men as spouses were tolerable. Marriage implied that a lady offered herself totally to her ruler and ace, as her grandma advises her: "When you marry, Devi, your heart moves up to your shoulder and slips down your arm and the palm of your hand. The hand that holds you tightly as you walk around the fire receives it like a gift. You cannot do anything about it: when you marry, it goes to him and you never get it back" (37).

Devi had many trusts from her eventual spouse who ought to be a divine resembling figure who might direct her tenderly. Her better half Mahesh, nonetheless, is "no prince, but a regional manager in a multinational company that makes detergents and toothpaste" (22). He sees marriage with limitation and separation, "as a necessity, a milestone like any other" (49) and he doesn't pay notice to the necessities of his significant other. All that regurgitating of

emotions is liberal, he says. It is un-Indian. She before long understands that while filling in as a housewife, everything she could ever want of a perfect spouse has been broken after marriage. Each one of those legends that her grandma told were false and don't fit into her genuine life. She feels as though her life is winding up progressively forlorn and purposeless in the enormous manor, and needs to invest more energy with her better half yet her ruler and ace is a bustling man with a great deal of excursions for work to make.

Mahesh was raised in a family air where a spouse should be restricted to the house without meddling in the life and exercises of guys. As indicated by PradeepTriKha: "Devi has some expectations from her husband, Mahesh to support and understand her on emotional grounds but her expectations are never realized" (9). Then again, Mahesh anticipates that his better half should turn into his buddy when he weds her. Devi has acknowledged soon that her significant other is underestimating her. For Devi, marriage just implied that she needed to figure out how to cherish her dictator spouse, while the heart she had arranged so well for his requests would stay "untouched, unsought for" (54). When she asks Mahesh for what good reason he wedded her, he finds the inquiry foolish and answers slyly: "whatever people get married for" (54).

Devi was shocked by the narratives told by her dad in-law (Baba) that were supporting male amazingness. Whenever Devi, communicates her craving to learn Sanskrit so as to comprehend Baba's citations better, Mahesh reacts:

"Why," Mahesh asked.

"So I can understand Baba's quotations better," I said.

"Don't be foolish," he said. "The English translations are good enough and what will you do with all this highbrow knowledge?" (52).

Career marriage conflict is additionally a significant factor in the arrangement of personality. Devi gets best instruction yet isn't permitted to seek after a vocation or lead her own actual existence decision. Virginia Woolf in *A Room of Ones' Own* has properly requested monetary freedom and space for a lady, with the goal that she can develop physically and rationally. As opposed to understanding her longing, Mahesh ignores it. The reason is that he has never

collaborated with Baba, and considers Sanskrit “highbrow knowledge” and marvels at what utilize such learning is to her.

Mahesh is “far too civilized” to whip her “rebellious body” when she denies him her body then he considers her a “teasing bitch”. Devi draws a difficult and exact image of her marriage: “This then is marriage, the end of ends, two or three brief encounters a month when bodies stutter together in lazy, inarticulate lust. Two weeks a month when the shadowy stranger who casually strips me of my name, snaps his fingers and demands a smiling handmaiden. And the rest? It is waiting, all over again, for life to begin, or to end and begin again. My education has left me unprepared for the vast, yawning middle chapters of my womanhood.” (54) It is exceedingly unexpected that for the duration of ladies’ lives, oneself is characterized through social connections; issues of merger and fusion of the self with others are critical.

Chodrow properly opines that female social jobs are more inflexible and less changed than men. The customary man centric family framework offers solidarity to the situation of man in the general public and disparages that of a lady. Devi’s conjugal life needs shading and energy that she would assume as she invests her time meandering about in the home, hearing Mayamma’s anecdotes about the past and conversing with Baba. Devi’s desire to go for a vocation or secure one more degree dampens after a debilitating tone and frame of mind. She is compelled to cancel them. Mahesh is hesitant to consider Devi to be having an autonomous identity. For him a lady is no other than a homemaker, a spouse or a mother.

Devi accomplishes the phase of “identity foreclosure”. She shows abnormal state of self-esteem and low dimension of nervousness. She thinks of her as self-notoriety more imperative than the weights of society. The essence of the issue shows up when both opine contrastingly on the subject of the issue. Devi herself feels no incredible want to have kids, yet Mahesh, a firm adherent to the conventional qualities like all other regular men-society believes that parenthood will instruct Devi to be a superior individual. Despite protracted endeavors, Devi can’t get pregnant. As she can’t imagine, she feels her entire being characterized as far as her “unfertile womb”, “I feel myself getting blurred in Mahesh’s eyes.

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The focus gets softer and softer, till everything dissolves into nothingness, everything but my stubborn, unrelenting womb" (93). Through this "stubborn, unrelenting womb", Hariharan endeavors a women's activist explanation of encounter.

The tale displays a desolate picture of conjugal brutalization, detainment and suffocation by and large also. As Baba reached the age of twenty one, his mother ordered him to look into the photographs provided and pick one from the three girls as his wife. Not even interested to look at the photos, Baba told his mother: "If you think they are healthy and well-trained, why should I doubt your word? But I don't like the names Hema and Mohana. They are too frivolous. They sound like back-chatting, tantrum-throwing, modern girls. You can go and see Parvati. There's an old, reliable name! Go, see if you like her." (62) Hariharan indicates extraordinary mockery of Devi's dad in-law (who was youthful around then) when he was approached to pick a lady of the hour for himself. He imprudently expresses that the name Parvati is progressively appropriate for him.

Along these lines, he chooses her out of the three young ladies. Also, the creator derides Baba by displaying Parvati (his better half) as a lady who abandons her family to wind up a lover. The epic demonstrates the assignment and distance of a knowledgeable and rich lady like Devi which is best delineated through the cruel experience Devi has at the medical clinic, a modern remedial organization second to none. She often visits the clinic for treatment so as to consider. "Her husband has found a doctor who will set right the rebelling organ and the straying tubes inside her, so that she can be mended, an efficient receptacle for motherhood" (89). Devi's internal organs disjoin because of unnecessary therapeutic treatment. Her desire for a solid feeling of retribution is shown in various structures and she designs unequivocal ways to get out. She infers fulfillment in the way that Mahesh is bothered by the way that she can't convey kids for Mahesh. She views it as an incredible weapon as flung against him.

**CONCLUSION:**

The novel portrays three fundamental characters-Devi, Sita, and Mayamma, who “walked a tightrope and struggled for some balance; for some means of survival they could fashion for themselves” (135). Mayamma, subsequent to tolerating her merciless destiny lives again through Parvathiyamma and Devi. Sita also has a few hindrances in her wedded life however keeps up her singularity and at last even finds the help of her little girl Devi. Devi defies the concealment of her character and delivers retribution like Kritiya, Durga or Kali. She surfaces as another lady who rises up out of her own ashes like a phoenix.

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